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DEPARTMENT FOR PA, NEA/ARN, INR/IC/CD, INR/S:STHIBEAULT AND
JMCCARTER, VOA NEWS CA, NEA/PPD:CBOURGEOIS, DBENZE AND
AFERNANDEZ, IIP/G/NEA-SA RWINCHESTER
WHITE HOUSE FOR NSC
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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KMDR](#) [PREL](#) [KPAO](#) [OPRC](#) [SY](#)

SUBJECT: Damascus Media Reaction: Asad, Nasrallah, Olmert,
Syria/Germany (8/15)

1. Summary: Syrian papers today reported that President Asad will deliver a speech focusing on the latest political developments in the region at the inauguration of the Fourth General Conference of the Syrian Journalists Union.

Papers also featured a televised speech by Hassan Nasrallah, SecGen of Hezbollah. Nasrallah hailed Hezbollah fighters, stressing that Lebanon has never before witnessed such a destruction of houses and infrastructure. He thanked all who helped the displaced Lebanese and said, "we will take the initiative to repair all damaged houses and give a hand to their owners as soon as possible." Nasrallah said that talk about Hizbollah's arms demands great responsibility and keenness. "It is not in the interest of Lebanon to shift discussion about sensitive things from closed-door rooms to open dialogue; this is a big mistake. We refuse to enter into disputes that don't serve Lebanon's interest," he added. He stressed that the resistance has achieved victory and said that those who want to disarm the resistance are going far beyond what the US and Israel have demanded from Lebanon and that the Lebanese army and international troops are incapable of protecting Lebanon against any Israeli assault. Nasrallah said that the coming days will uncover the losses of the enemy. He stressed that Lebanon's power lies in its resistance and national unity and called for resumption of national dialogue.

Papers also reported a special session by the Israeli Knesset during which Israeli PM Olmert acknowledged that Israel has received painful and tough blows during its aggression against Lebanon, pointing out that the missiles of the Lebanese resistance caused Israel great losses and made Israel pay dearly for its aggression. Olmert held himself responsible for the war against Lebanon, and stressed that he will continue to pursue Hizbollah's members at all times and in all places. "I will not ask permission from anybody to do that" he claimed, describing UNSC Resolution 1701 as a political achievement for Israel.

Papers also reported that Syrian Deputy Foreign Minister Dr. Faisal al-Miqdad discussed the latest developments in the Middle East and the Israeli aggression against Lebanon and Israeli practices against the Palestinian people with Rolf Mutzenich and Neils Annen, members of the Foreign Relations Committee of the

German Parliament. Dr. Miqdad briefed the German MPs on Syrian policy vis-a-vis the situation in the region, confirming that continuing Israeli occupation is the basis of problems in the region. The MPs thanked Syria for facilitating the evacuation of German nationals from Lebanon through Syrian territory. They also voiced interest in continuing contacts between Germany and Syria, and in seeing Germany and Europe play a constructive role in establishing a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

End of summary.

12. Selected Headlines:

"President Asad today delivers a speech before the Journalists Union Conference on latest political developments in the region" (Government-owned Tishreen, 8/15)

"Nasrallah, Hizbollah SecGen: We achieved a strategic victory for Lebanon and the Arab nation [Umma]; talk about dismantling the arms of the resistance is harmful and exceeds the enemy's demands" (Government-owned Tishreen, 8/15)

"The questioning stage commences in Israel. Israeli PM Olmert acknowledges painful blows from the national resistance. Israeli calls for investigation committees" (Government-owned Tishreen, 8/15)

"Displaced Lebanese start to return to their homes. The enemy leaves behind presents for Lebanon's children: mines and cluster bombs" (Government-owned Tishreen, 8/15)

"PM Otri reviews with a delegation of Arab engineers their role in rebuilding Lebanon" (Government-owned Al-Ba'th, 8/15)

"Information Minister Bilal: Israel responds to peace initiatives with more terrorism and massacres" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 8/15)

"Berri, [Speaker of Lebanese Parliament]: We stand in one trench with the national resistance. Former Lebanese PM Hoss: The

"A Heavy Price for Aggression"

Muhammad Khayr al-Jammali, an editorialist in government-owned Al-Thawra, wrote (8/15): "Israel has paid a very heavy price for its war against Lebanon...."

"Illusions of power and arrogance led Olmert's government far from reality. It believed that its war against the Resistance would take three days to one week at the longest to accomplish all its objectives, namely, liquidating the Resistance and removing its threat and arranging the situation in Lebanon in line with the new Middle East plan, to the point where Lebanon would be forced to sign a new capitulation agreement posing a more serious threat to Lebanon, its national and pan-Arab role, and its historical relations with fraternal Syria and its Arab surroundings than the threat posed by the 17 May 1983 agreement, which was imposed on Lebanon under the spears of the Israeli occupation.

"That was Israel's major strategic mistake, because no army, now matter how powerful, can win a war with an unyielding organized resistance with the will to fight and stand fast...."

"The Valiant Resistance and Some of its Great Lessons"

Khalaf al-Jarrad, Chief Editor of government-owned Tishreen, wrote (8/15): "Condoleezza Rice revealed that the main goal of the war against Lebanon was giving birth to a 'new Middle East'

by caesarian section through the 'invincible Israeli army.'
Having done that, she again tried to help Israelis get over
their faltering operation. However, giving them extensions of
one week after another did them no good, for the baby--the new
Middle Rift [the writer uses the word "sharkh" meaning rift,
instead of "sharq" meaning East]--died before seeing
daylight....

"We bet that the Zionist leadership, which has lost its mind,
has committed a fatal strategic mistake by expanding its ground
offensive on Lebanese soil. In fact, we can say for sure that it
has taken a suicidal step for its army, which will deploy
further north to the Litani River, and it might go beyond it to
fall into the trap of the resistance. At that point, hundreds of
Israeli soldiers will find themselves and their tanks in
ambushes and faced by acts of confrontation and surprise
attacks. The Zionist army will not leave the 'Lebanese quagmire'
crowned with laurels, as its leaders dream. Instead, it will
leave covered with disgrace, defeat, and shame."

"The Baby Has Been Born Disfigured"

Abbud As'ad Abbud, an editorialist in government-owned Al-
Thawra, wrote (8/15): "Resolution 1701 is one of the greatest
acts of collusion in history, a resolution containing every form
of verbal, [human] rights, and hazy trickery to give
opportunities for revenge and to complete the commission of the
crime.

"But all of this trickery, collusion, and plotting has not
always been in Israel's favor. On the contrary, sometimes it has
been counter to its interests. Israel surprised its fans and
supporters among those engineering the resolution that its
capacity for revenge and vengeance was not at the previous
level, but was even greater. And it surprised Arabs that their
ability to reject oppression and to resist is far greater than
Israel's capabilities.

"Mr. Kofi Annan, I respect your pain that the United Nations,
represented by the Security Council, was not able to agree on
stopping the aggression against Lebanon until after the passage
of a whole month. This is what you announced during the session
of the collusive resolution. And I respect the pain that you did
not announce, sir, that you were still convinced that this is
the United Nations that must be. I believe it is the right of
the oppressed peoples on Earth to create another organization of
nations. Perhaps it will be able to keep them safe from US
hegemony and oppression.

"As for the delivery of Dr. Condoleezza Rice, who understood the
labor pains earlier, I console her on the baby, it was born
deformed....

Have we won? Yes and, perhaps, it is the greatest victory in
Arab history.... We are the ones who have created Israel. We
created our affliction with our own hands. Who claims that
Israel is a state that cannot be defeated? Who claims that its
army is the strongest army in the world? It is Arabs, since
they let Israel practically leave them behind and triumph over
them in every battle....

"Today we are on the threshold of new horizons with new givens
and truths that have been confirmed by the Hizbollah fighters.
It is a victory that is not influenced (and will not be
influenced) by fighters sitting down on the banks of the Litani
or on the banks of the Mediterranean. Has Hizbollah ever
mentioned that its cultural concept of resistance stops at the
boundary of a river or a sea?

"Oh you Israelis, you have won by international collusion but
the illusion has fallen. We have exchanged places. So go look
for the illusion of victory and Rice's disfigured baby while we
celebrate for the resistance and for the new truths...."

"A Perspective: 1701 and the International Quagmire"

Charles Kamleh, an op-ed writer in government-owned Tishreen, wrote (8/15): "One who views the details of UNSC Resolution 1701 discovers without any great effort or abundance of intelligence its shortcomings, which are hidden under the guise of the deceptive humanitarian scene. It leads to a result that says that the pressures that Washington and Paris have exerted to come up with a resolution such as this were, in effect, an acknowledgment of the failure to achieve the objective or policy of the aggression on the battlefield. [That objective] is to make the war a Lebanese-Lebanese war, in addition to setting the stage for accomplishing the US-Israeli plan....

"This resolution is a diplomatic achievement that serves Israel's interests.... It has absolutely absolved Israel of the consequences of its war crimes....

"Did the resolution deal with the heart of the conflict? With Shab'a Farms, for example, or the file of the Lebanese prisoners in parallel with the Israeli prisoners? Did it deal with the issue of compensation for the losses that Lebanon has suffered because of this US-Israeli civilization? Moreover, there is the resolution's intentional neglect of the issue of holding Israel accountable for its mass crimes.

"The limitless justification of any of Israel's measures under the banner of self defense is an international shortcoming that Israel uses whenever it wants. So the observer cannot but say that Resolution 1701 has not been an international resolution, but an Israeli-US resolution carried out by the United Nations in the manner of Resolution 1559...."

"The Resistance Era"

Omar Jaftali, an editorialist in government-owned Tishreen, wrote (8/15): "When Israeli Foreign Minister Livni says that no power on earth can disarm Hizbollah, she is, no doubt, talking about a bitter Israeli experience that Israel has not faced since the glorious October war about 33 years ago. The Israeli Minister is most aware of the military defeat Israel has suffered, despite its huge army equipped with the most developed and deadly and conventional weapons. Nevertheless, this army has failed in the real test, where the flexing of muscles was useless without a confrontation in the field.... The enemy was the first to admit before the media that only fighters with excellent fighting experience and high resolve could engage in this type and method of fighting....

"Therefore, it is possible to say that we are experiencing the resistance era par excellence, the era of glowing Arab anger against the neo-imperialist protectors of Israel, who must have been shocked to see the humiliation of their protege, which they created to serve as their disciplining stick in the region.

Corbin